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From: Cheney, Sally (DPH)
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2006 11:33 AM
To: Nassif, Julianne (DPH)
Subject: RE: Drug Laboratory staffing

This is exactly what I needed. Thanks. It also came at a critical time, as we just found out that we have been hit by the Governor's 9c cuts...\$171, 120 to the state lab account, mostly in personnel...and I have to write an impact statement today.

I will also forward this to Carol C., after Al takes a look at it, so she and I can send it on to Labor to see if we can ask staff to help out.

Sally

From: Nassif, Julianne (DPH)
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2006 11:14 AM
To: DeMaria, Alfred (DPH); Cheney, Sally (DPH)
Subject: Drug Laboratory staffing

Al & Sally,

The understaffing in the Drug Laboratory has reached a critical point resulting in an increasing sample backlog. As of the end of October, the turnaround time for samples submitted is 39 days (far exceeding the 20 day goal) and 4942 samples unanalyzed. A steady increase in submissions, coupled with loss of positions due to early retirement has resulted in this difficult situation. It is exacerbated by the medical leave of one chemist who will be out for the next few months to care for her premature infant.

We need to implement some short and long term changes to improve throughput in this laboratory. Currently, there are 11.7 chemists (including the one on leave), 2 evidence officers and 1 laboratory supervisor in the Jamaica Plain laboratory. These staff are currently working 50-60 hours of overtime in addition to their regular shifts each week, but are still falling further behind. In order to provide timely analyses (20 day turn around), additional staff are needed. We project that 3 additional chemists and 1 supervisor evidence officer are needed. Ultimately, additional staff may be needed as we seek national accreditation for the laboratory.

For the short-term, I would make the following recommendations for managing the backlog in the Drug Laboratory:

- Increase available overtime to Drug Laboratory staff (maximum of 8 hrs/employee). Since not all employees are interested in additional hours, the total would be 75-80 hours/week.
- Reassign former Drug Laboratory staff currently working in other SLI functions to work in the Drug Laboratory on a temporary basis. (Steve Ridley to supervise the evidence office full time, Nancy Tisei 1.5-2.5 days/per week to process samples). These individuals are trained and will be able to make an immediate contribution to the operation.
- Create at least 1 additional permanent position in the Drug lab.

Let's discuss how to move forward. Thanks.

Julie

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